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*himile, hwō fōrun thea hwiton sterron*, and, as a suggestive counterpart, *Elene* 87 ff.: *ūp lōcade . . . geseah hē . . . wuldres trēo ofer wolcna hrōf / golde ge[g]lenged*.

As to the expression *under sunnan*, its occurrence in the *Metres of Boethius* 14. 7 may be noted: *ðēah þēs middangeard ond þis manna cyn / sȳ under sunnan* (dative) *sūð, west, ond ēast / his anwalde eall underðieded*.

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### "UNDER THE SONNE"

Professor C. Alphonso Smith offers a tempting explanation (*Mod. Lang. Notes*, XXXVII, 120-1) of a passage in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, A, 1696-8:

whan this duc was come unto the launde  
Under the sonne he looketh, and anon  
He was war of Arcite and Palamon.

He believes that "under the sun" means "all around, turning from one point of the compass to the other," and in support quotes from several modern American versions of certain ballads. But it is very doubtful if the phrases in Chaucer and the second ballad are connected in history or meaning. The points of the compass, and the "all," which make the meaning clear in the ballad, are lacking in the Chaucerian passage. "All under the sun," being clearer than "under the sun," should be the earlier and not the later form. "Under the sun" and like phrases are common in Anglo-Saxon and especially in the Bible ("sub sole" occurs dozens of times in *Ecclesiastes*), and mean simply "on earth." This does not fit the *Knight's Tale* passage, so we may do well to consider another interpretation, not a poetic but a literal and perhaps colloquial one, which will show why the phrase apparently does not occur before Chaucer. As Theseus came out of the dark wood into the sunny glade, he peered in the direction of the early-morning sun, shading his eyes with his hand perhaps, a picturesque figure which has always seemed to some readers what Chaucer meant to sketch. This explanation seems quite as well as Dr. Smith's to fit the first ballad passage which he quotes.

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### A PORTMANTEAU WORD OF 1761: "TOMAX"

In the sixth chapter of *Through the Looking-Glass*, Alice meets Humpty Dumpty, and asks him to explain the meaning of the poem called "Jabberwocky." Everyone remembers the "hard